

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 98 - 191 and 198-208 without prejudice to consideration in a continuing application. Please amend claims 192-197 and add new claims 209-211 as set forth in the complete listing of the claims and their status that follows.

Claims 1-191 (Canceled)

192. (Currently amended) A method of providing spinal interbody fusion, comprising the steps of:

accessing the intradiscal space between two generally opposed upper and lower vertebral bodies;

providing an expandable structure comprising a top element, a bottom element and ~~an a~~ a plurality of intermediate element elements, each being of substantially similar configuration, said top element being configured to contact the upper vertebral body, said bottom element being configured to contact the lower vertebral body, and said intermediate elements configured to reside between said top element and said bottom element;

introducing said top element and said bottom element into said intradiscal space; and,

introducing said intermediate ~~element~~ elements consecutively between ~~and in contact~~ with said top element and said bottom element such that an intermediate element contacts said top element and another intermediate contacts said bottom element to relatively move said top element and said bottom element apart generally along the axis of the spine as said intermediate ~~element~~ elements are introduced to thereby distract and support said upper and lower vertebral bodies.

193. (Currently amended) The method of claim 192, wherein each of said intermediate ~~element~~ elements is introduced by sliding between said top element and said bottom element.

194. (Currently amended) The method of claim 192, wherein ~~the~~ a first intermediate element is configured for interlocking coupling with at least said top element.

195. (Currently amended) The method of claim ~~192~~ 194, wherein ~~the~~ a second intermediate element is configured for interlocking with said bottom element and with said first intermediate element.

196. (Currently amended) The method of claim 192, wherein the top element has an area greater than ~~the~~ an intermediate element.

197. (Currently amended) The method of claim 196, wherein the bottom element has an area greater than ~~the~~ any of said plurality of intermediate element elements.

Claims 198-208 (Canceled)

209. (New) The method of claim 192, wherein one of said top element, said bottom element and said plurality of intermediate elements is formed of implant materials.

210. (New) The method of claim 209, wherein all of said top element, said bottom element and said plurality of intermediate elements are formed of implant materials

211. (New) The method of claim 192, further comprising the step of introducing bone filler material between the two opposed upper and lower vertebral bodies and adjacent to and in contact with said expandable structure.